

***Microseris borealis* (Bong.) Schultz-Bip**

northern microseris
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

Status: State Sensitive

Rank: G4?S2

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock, et al. (1955): This is an essentially hairless perennial herb arising from a taproot. It is 4 to 24 in. (10-60 cm) tall and has a leafless or inconspicuously bracted stem, which is often curved at the base. The plant has milky juice. The elongated basal leaves mostly taper towards the tip gradually, and are entire or toothed, commonly 2 to 10 in. (5-25 cm) long including the ill-defined leaf stalk, and 1/16 to 1/2 in. (2-12 mm) wide. The ray flowers are yellow. The flower heads are solitary and more or less bell shaped. The whorl of bracts subtending the flower heads is about 1/3 to 1/2 in. (10-13 mm) high, and sometimes lightly black-wooly. The small, brown fruits are 1/8 to 1/4 in. (5-6 mm) long and are ribbed. At the apex of the fruit are 30-60 brownish, fine, short, stiff hairs (the pappus) that are slightly thickened at their bases.

Identification Tips: Within its range *M. borealis* is similar to *M. laciniata* and can be distinguished from *M. laciniata* by the following characteristics: *M. borealis* has 30-60 pappus hairs which are thickened at their bases, whereas *M. laciniata* has approximately 10 pappus hairs which are chaffy-flattened for 1/32 to 1/16 in. (1-2 mm) at the base. *M. borealis* flowers July through September, while *M. laciniata* flowers earlier from May through July.

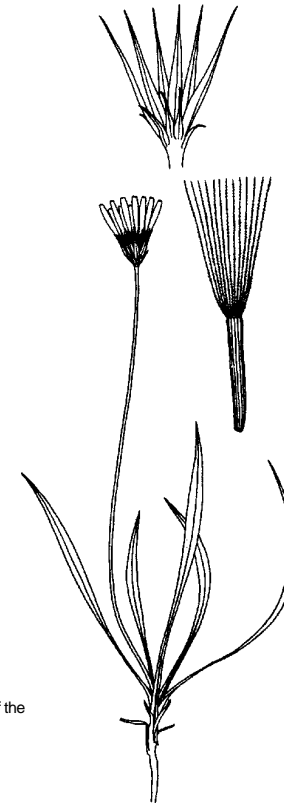
Phenology: This species flowers mostly from July through September.

Range: *Microseris borealis* is found from southern Alaska to northwestern California, entirely west of the Cascade Range. In Washington it has been found in Pierce, Clallam, and Skamania counties.

Habitat: This species generally occurs in wet meadows, sphagnum bogs and in the mountains from 30 to 4760 feet (9-1450 meters) elevation. Associated species at one or more sites in Washington include sweet gale (*Myrica gale*), smooth tofieldia (*Tofieldia glabra*), Rainier pleated gentian (*Gentian calycosa*), bog blueberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*), English sundew (*Drosera anglica*), alpine laurel (*Kalmia microphylla*), alpine bluegrass (*Agrostis humilis*), Sierra shooting star (*Dodecatheon jeffreyi*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*).

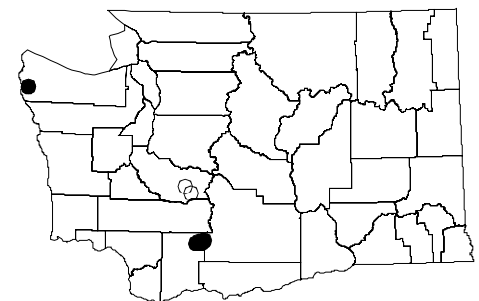
Microseris borealis

northern microseris



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Known distribution
of *Microseris borealis*
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Ecology: This species is an obligate wetland species (USDA, 2002). However it occurs in both permanently flooded wetlands and in wetlands that are only temporarily or seasonally flooded.

State Status Comments: Since 1919 there have been fewer than twenty documented occurrences of *Microseris borealis* in Washington. Most of these sites are in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Inventory Needs: All known occurrences should be revisited, and periodic monitoring is necessary to document population changes due to elk disturbance.

Threats and Management Concerns: Grazing and trampling by elk are the main threats to this species as well as use of off road vehicles in and near wetlands.

Comments: Hitchcock et. al (1955) refer to this species as *Apargidium boreale* (Bong.) Torr & Gray.

References:

- Douglas, G.W., G.B. Straley, D. Meidinger, and J. Pojar. 1998. *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* vol. 1: *Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons*. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Victoria, British Columbia. 436 pp.
- Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1955 *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 5: Compositae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 343 pp.
- USDA, NRCS. 2002. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA. (Accessed January 21, 2004).